

Syston and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

APR
2023

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the Syston and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

Finally, we have seen the last of winter and we are beginning to see the Spring flowers in all their glory.

I was very pleased to hear how much people really enjoyed the talk by Dr. Ann Featherstone about Sweeney Todd and you will be pleased to hear I had no ill effects from my pie dinner.

I was very happy to be invited to the Group Leaders meeting, and it was extremely pleasing to hear how well attended many of the groups are. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to such a successful event.

I know people are fed up with me harping on about the vacancies we will have on the committee next year, but it is very important that we fill the vacancies. These are -

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Assistant Group Co-ordinator and

Committee Member

I would like to stress that anyone accepting any of the above positions would be given all the help they require. If you wish to know any more details about any position, please drop me a line at sadu3achair@gmail.com or come and see me at our next Members Meeting.

The talk at our next Members Meeting on April 12th is Mike Storr – ‘Masters of Mirth’ which should be a good laugh.

See you soon.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

OPEN DAY - DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

A reminder that our Open Day on April 26th will be at the Grosvenor (same venue as the last Open Day) between 11.00am and 2.00pm. A goodly proportion of groups will be showcasing their activities.

Posters will be going up in the surrounding area soon – many thanks to those who are helping with this task. That said, YOU can help by telling your friends and neighbours about the event and encouraging them to come along. Why not come along yourself and bring some of them with you? Existing members can explore whether they might like to join another group.

Past Open Days have proved very successful in boosting our numbers, so please put the date in your diary and spread the word.

PLEA FROM YOUR EDITOR

Whilst the content of the Newsletter comes from a variety of sources, contributions from members are important. I'd like to be sharing more details of what groups have been doing, and have articles, photos and other items from members. However, to do that, I need members to provide such material.

A few of you responded to my similar plea last month, but we are not back up to the level of contributions we once had.

If there is anything else you would like to see in the Newsletter, please do let me know. I can only act on feedback if I actually receive it.

I would again stress that in sending anything for inclusion, you don't need to worry about spelling or whether the wording is spot on, as editor I can tidy things like that up. If I feel there's a problem over publishing, I will let you know. If I'd like to make significant amendments, I'll consult you beforehand and get your agreement.

Come on, don't be shy, share!

GROUP NEWS

CAN YOU HELP WITH A GROUP?

As you may be aware , we have almost 40 groups on offer to our members.

Each group is led by wonderful people who offer their time to make it happen, some even run more than one group.

As a thank you we invited the organisers to a buffet lunch where they had the chance to speak to each other, compare notes, swap ideas and support (as well as enjoying a scrummy lunch).

If you think you would like to help in any way, maybe as a group buddy or even start a new group, there is a whole network here, all willing and able to support you.

Our U3A is RUN BY MEMBERS FOR MEMBERS

NEW GROUP - EARLY BRITISH HISTORY

System Community Centre has set aside a room for this possible new Group, on the third Thursday of each month, from 2.00 – 3.30 pm, starting on 20th April.

Please contact me if you are interested in joining this group. I would be grateful if those who have already expressed an interest would confirm whether they are able to join, now knowing the date and time. Another few members would make this a more viable group.

Norma Grimes email: norma.grimes@btinternet tel 07582 413517

NEW GROUP – IMAGINARIUM

‘Imaginarium’

What on earth is that I hear you ask?

It’s just your imagination.....

Do you remember listening as a child to the tales told by older members of the family, or sitting with visiting friends to your home, hearing stories that captivated attention and imagination?

Has the art of storytelling been lost?

Some people enjoy writing things down, and that’s wonderful. Others might like to express memories and imagination in other ways.

Here’s some ideas for how we could share some storytelling....

The plaster crumbled around the window.

The man whistled so cheerfully you’d never guess he had a corpse in his suitcase.

The colour green reminded him of home.

She went slowly along the corridor, trying to find the source of the noise.

It might take a while to finish the task but she knew it had to be done. Unpleasant tasks always have to be done.

The owl swooped down and took the mouse, just as she knew it would.

His eyes were brown with a tiny fleck of gold at the edge.

Could we actually have an **Imaginarium** group for our u3a? Interested?

Contact me on pat27wherton@gmail.com

FEELING CRAFTY GROUP

Wishing you a Happy 🐰 Easter from the 'Feeling Crafty' group.
Last week we were busy making daffodils from tissue and crepe paper.
Helen Disley



UKULELE GROUP



One of our earliest Ukulele group members, Sue Palmer, has sadly passed away after a short illness.

Sue was always up for a laugh and joined in many of our gigs, helping to share her love of playing the ukulele and bringing a little joy and happiness to our audiences.

She was also a member of other u3a interest groups, including table tennis and line dancing.

She will be sadly missed. RIP.

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

The group welcomed 2 new members. We explored the importance of looking at the whole family, not just the direct line. Some people go down the route of working back just trying to trace grandparents, great grandparents, great great grandparents and so on. They ignore the brothers and sisters, and the other husbands and wives they may have had during their lives.

We looked at a case where identifying other family members was crucial in tracing the direct line, and also meant a couple of interesting characters, who were pioneers in Canada, did not go unnoticed.

Birthplaces on census data are not always correct. In this case there was no trace of a baptism in the recorded birth village for Louisa Ball. But a search for baptisms under the father's name, (gleaned from Louisa's marriage record), located a raft of children, all born after Louisa. That provided her mother's first name and in turn led to her parents' marriage being found in a different village, the one where it transpired Louisa had been baptised.

With knowledge of more family members, it was possible to locate the family on the 1841 census. However, Louisa's mother wasn't listed, neither was the youngest child, a son Jesse, baptised only 18 months earlier. More digging established that sadly her mother had died, she was buried on the very same day her last born child was baptised. So, what had happened to Jesse, had he died in infancy? No, he was listed with an aunt and uncle, and later referred to as their adopted son. Jesse and his adopted father were the pioneers who went out to the wilds of Canada. Unfortunately Jesse was only 25 when he received a fatal blow on the head from an earthenware bottle, wielded during an altercation. His adopted father and uncle lived on to a ripe old age.

WHAT'S ON NEXT

GENERAL MEETINGS

In the Brookside Room at the Community Centre – talks start 10.30am
Tea/coffee and mingling from 10.00am

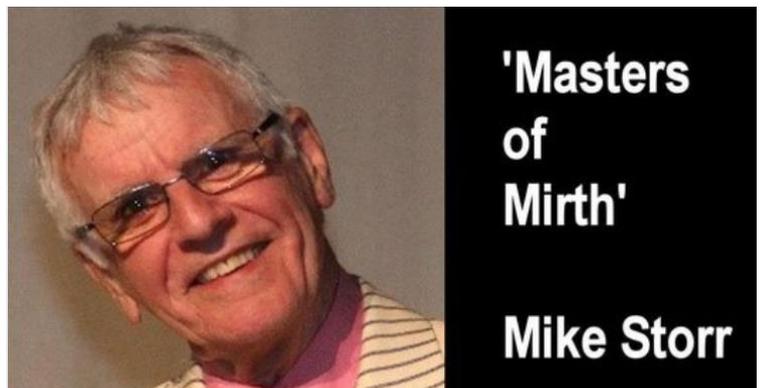
April 12th

Mike Storr - 'Masters of Mirth'

An affectionate and humorous look at some favourite Music Hall laughter makers.....

- How Music Hall began.
- My favourite characters – Joyce Grenfell, Stanley Holloway, Cyril Fletcher, Al Read to name but a few,
- Examples of their acts including their famous monologues

A light-hearted and fun presentation!





May 10th, 2023:

Peter Barratt – ‘Alice Hawkins - The Making of her Statue’.

For those groups who have heard my talk on Alice previously, I now offer an update with a special section on the making and unveiling of the statue of Alice in centenary year 2018.

It is a fascinating story of Alice's life, the fundraising campaign I co-lead and included is a short TV documentary on the making and unveiling of her statue in the Leicester marketplace.

Generally recognized as commencing centenary year celebrations in the UK.

June 21st, 2023: Note this is the 3rd Wednesday of the Month

Julie Johnson - (Our Syston u3a Vitality Editor) “My not so prim and proper Victorian ancestors”

The Victorians are generally thought to be very prim and proper, but come along to my talk about my own Victorian ancestors and you'll see that is a sweeping generalisation.

As some of you know, I have been researching my family history for several years. I've found runaway brides, bigamists, a mistress, “lodgers” and “housekeepers” who were rather more than that, sons and daughters who were really grandchildren and plenty more besides.

Let me tell you about some of them.



LAST MONTH'S GM

I seem to have been plagued with things happening to scupper my plans to listen to our GM speakers. However, more than one person commented that they had thought Sweeney Todd was a real life character, not merely a fictional one. But, what about characters we think are fictional but in fact are based on real life people -

Arthur Conan Doyle met surgeon Dr. Joseph Bell in 1877, when he served as his clerk at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. After writing several popular stories about consulting detective Sherlock Holmes (who really needs no introduction), Doyle admitted that the man was at least partially inspired by Bell's super observant ways and his ability to make large assumptions with little evidence. Apparently, Bell was quite proud of the connection and even went on to help with police investigations in Scotland alongside Sir

Henry Littlejohn, whom Doyle also cited as an influence. In a letter to the author, Bell even joked, “You are yourself Sherlock Holmes and well you know it.”

Indiana Jones was based on a real life character. Hiram Bingham III was a Yale professor and adventurer who was most famous for coming across the Machu Picchu ruins. There are loads of similarities between him and Indy, but the biggest nod to Hiram is the opening scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* being set a stone's throw away from the Machu Picchu ruins.

In 1928, at the age of merely 15, Danish teenager Palle Huld went on a journey around the world, inspiring the globe-trotting character of young **Tintin**. Huld's journey came about with help from the newspaper *Politiken*, who held a competition open to teen boys in honor of Jules Verne in which they would travel the globe for 46 days...completely unaccompanied. Huld travelled to England, Scotland, Canada, Japan, Korea, China, the Soviet Union, Poland and Germany before returning to Copenhagen 44 days later to a crowd of 22,000 excited people. Sadly, he did not have an adorable Scottish Terrier with him upon his return.

Norman Bates, the villain of the seminal horror film *Psycho*, was directly inspired by murderer and body snatcher Edward Gein. Like Bates, Gein was intensely devoted to and warped by his mother's fanatic religious teachings. His deranged disposition only became more severe after his mother's death, at which point he began robbing graves, then butchering and mutilating women, and even creating furniture and clothes from skin and body parts.

One of the most simultaneously reviled and loved professors in J.K. Rowling's series *Harry Potter*, **Severus Snape**, actually took several characteristics from Rowling's chemistry teacher John Nettleship. And apparently the similarities were noticed by everyone but the teacher. When people started asking him if he was Professor Snape, his wife had to let him down gently by explaining, “Of course you are – but I didn't want to tell you.” The long-haired, long-nosed professor (who really doesn't think he's as mean as a man who berates orphans) said the whole thing was made slightly better when Snape was portrayed by Alan Rickman. Sadly, Nettleship passed away in 2011 after a battle with cancer.

You know that grumpy old fictional man by the name of **Ebenezer Scrooge** who is visited by three ghosts in order to learn the true meaning of Christmas? Unfortunately, he was inspired by an even more miserly man, a Member of Parliament named John Elwes. Elwes inherited his uncle's fortune and took up his eccentric behaviour, going to bed as soon as the sun set to save on candles, wearing old clothing to avoid buying new ones, letting his house fall into disrepair to avoid costs to fix it and even eating mouldy food. So no, he never bought anyone a goose for Christmas dinner. Elwes wasn't the only person to inspire Dickens, however—three different spinsters were the proto-Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*.

Elzie Segar created the iconic sailor **Popeye** for a comic strip series that debuted in 1929. The well muscled sailor man was reportedly based on Frank Fiegel, a man from Segar's hometown. Fiegel was famous for his corncob pipe and eye patch. He was known as a brawler who made friends with the local kids. Popeye's friend Wimpy and “goil” Olive Oyl were also based on hometown locals.

The animated bombshell **Betty Boop** was inspired by an actress named Helen Kane. She was so outraged by the cartoon caricature that she sued the creator. Kane was known for scattling “boop-boop-a-doop” in songs during her Broadway performances. The judge in her lawsuit eventually ruled that she herself had appropriated the scattling phrase and so the cartoon creators could not have stolen it from her. But she did have dark ringlet curls and a strong resemblance to the cartoon character.



LeicesterSymphonyOrchestra
101st Concert Season
Sunday 21 May 2023
3.00pm
De Montfort Hall

SUMMER ENIGMA

Guest Conductor
Dexter Drown
Leader Catherine Cole

Borodin - Prince Igor Overture
Elgar - Enigma Variations
Tchaikovsky - Symphony No. 4

DMH TICKETS: £20.00 / £16.00
Family tickets (2 adults and up to 3 children): £42.00 / £35.00
18 and under/NUS + 2-4-1 carer's scheme: £5.00
LSO subscription – all 3 concerts 10% reduction on full price tickets

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM:
De Montfort Hall Box Office
www.demontforthall.co.uk • Tel: (0116) 233 3111
www.leicestersymphonyorchestra.co.uk
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1078708 • LIMITED COMPANY NO. 1397368

making music
DE MONTFORT HALL
Leicester

Reduced Price Concert Ticket Offer.

I am very pleased to say that the orchestra is able to offer your group reduced ticket prices for our next concert to be held at 3pm on Sunday 21 May in De Montfort Hall, Leicester. We are able to offer you £20 tickets for just £10.

Attached to this email please find a poster for the concert, (see left) I hope you will find the concert and the offer attractive. Our Ticket Secretary, Sue Mee, will be pleased to take your order. With very best wishes

Sam Dobson
Leicester Symphony Orchestra

Anyone interested in taking up this offer should contact our chairman Clive Iliffe
sadu3achair@gmail.com

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS U3A TALKS



Cotton and Linen: Environmental impact of Textile production

Helen Howard, u3a Canterbury, will focus on the environmental impact of two important textiles.

Fri 14 April at 2pm
Free – online via zoom

Book [here](#)



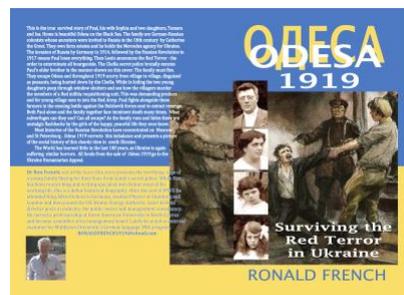
Toulouse Lautrec and the Cabarets of Paris

The world of eighteen–nineties Montmartre in Paris – a talk by Peter Webb.

Thurs 20 April at 2pm

Free – online via zoom

Book [here](#)



War in Ukraine, 1919

Ron French of Beccles u3a explores the terror of the Russian Revolution in Ukraine through a personal story.

Mon 24 April at 10am

Free – Online via zoom

Book [here](#)

AILEEN'S GAME



Ian and his mum Aileen, pictured together in 2004

More than fifty years after coming up with the idea with his mother on a bus travelling across America, East Suffolk u3a member Ian has made a word game to rival the smash hit Wordle.

‘Aileen’s Game’ challenges members to create as many words as possible within a five- by- five grid. The twist is that every other letter is automated for you.

Made available to play online this year through the u3a website, it has already been played thousands of times. The origins of the game stretch back more than half a century to when

Ian was a teenager spending his summer holidays in America.

Ian explains, “The game came about back in 1965. Mum and I had been visiting her sister in Canada and were taking a greyhound bus from Thunder Bay to Cleveland, Ohio to see her uncle.

“My mum loved word games, loved them – even in her 90s, she was a mastermind at scrabble. We were just on the bus, playing with word games and a piece of paper.

Somehow we came up with this game – we had a grid of 5x5, and we each came up with alternate letters. And we liked it.”

Over the years, the game has become a regular source of entertainment for family and friends but Ian always assumed that, without technical developer skills, that was the furthest he could take it.

Read more about how Ian eventually managed to produce the game now available [here](#) and have a go yourself.

U3A CALLS FOR COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE

u3a has signed a statement, along with 70 other organisations, calling for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to raise awareness of the issue people face in later life.

u3a is excited to be joining forces with more than 70 other organisations to call for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to raise awareness of the issues people face in later life and to bring together decision makers to make change happen.

An extract from the statement reads, " Older people want to be part of the country’s vision, now, and in the future. As our older population becomes increasingly diverse, we believe that older people urgently need a champion at the heart of the government, working alongside the Older People’s Commissioners for Wales and Northern Ireland, to help make the UK the best place in the world to grow old."

A Commissioner for Older People and Ageing would be an independent champion of older people, raising awareness and working to resolve issues that people face in their later life. This includes ensuring that policy and practice across government considers the long-term needs of people in later life and the implications of our ageing population on society.

u3a signed this statement in the hope that it will enable older adults to have an increased voice in the future - including the perspectives of u3a members.

Read the statement on [the Independent Age website](#).

What issues would you want a Commissioner to lobby for and promote on your behalf? Please let us know at impact@u3a.org.uk



The u3a radio podcast, set up in 2020, showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers.

The entire series is available to listen to on our [YouTube channel](#), and since January 2022, has also been available to listen to on podcasting platforms including [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

The team are always looking for more stories – [please get in touch](#) if you'd like to contribute.

You can find more national u3a news at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Push Back Ageism is a multi-layered, nation-wide initiative to change the narrative and challenge preconceptions around age and older adults and what it means to grow older.

The u3a movement believes that everyone has a positive contribution to make to the community around them and age should not be a factor in this. We want to see a world where people are seen for who they are not based on preconceptions to do with their age. We want a society which accepts that every age brings with it many new and exciting opportunities.

By providing people opportunities to come together, learn, volunteer and stay active, the u3a movement is integral to promoting health and wellbeing as we age. We believe that emphasising a positive view of ageing and working in a collaborative way with others holding the same values will show that there is a different way of looking at ageing and older people. Find more about this initiative [here](#)

NETWORK NEWS ITEMS

Something not too far away that might be of interest -



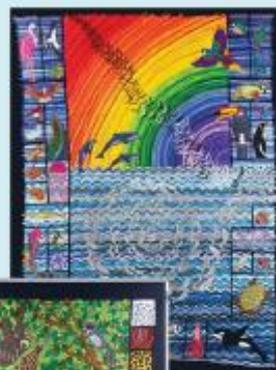
Threads through Creation spectacular scenes in silk by Jacqui Parkinson

A vibrant combination

This is an astonishing display of twelve huge embroidered panels. Inspired by Genesis, the first book in the Bible, textile artist Jacqui Parkinson retells its wonderful story in a vibrant combination of silks, hand-dyed materials, metallic leathers, gold leaf – with eight million stitches!

Twelve huge panels

Jacqui has a national reputation for spectacular, large scale work. Her exhibitions have been displayed in many cathedrals and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors. This exhibition is touring twenty cathedrals. The panels are nearly 3m high and up to 4m wide. They start with strong elemental pieces illustrating the first 'days' of creation; then they become more complex and exuberant, as the story takes us into the Garden of Eden.



Perfect for family, friends and schoolchildren

You'll find the work eye-catching and very attractive. Children love it. And it's especially fascinating for anyone who stitches, seeing close up Jacqui's unique techniques.

USUAL OPENING TIMES Monday to Saturday - 10 to 4 Sunday - 12 to 3

Please check Cathedral website for opening times and for dates when there is limited or no access.

peterborough-cathedral.org.uk
creation-threads.co.uk

Entry for visitors is by donation

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED

VOLUNTEER CENTRE AGM ANNOUNCED

The Annual General Meeting of the Syston and District Volunteer Centre will be held at Beedles Lake Golf Club on Tuesday 16th August immediately following the regular monthly Community Lunch. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Paul Lomas, says: “The AGM gives Members the opportunity to judge and express an opinion on how well the Centre’s affairs have been managed over the past year. Copies of the Centre accounts and a report from the Board of Trustees will be circulated at the meeting. The constitution of the Centre requires all Trustees to retire at the AGM with the opportunity to offer to serve for another year. I am pleased to be able to report that all current Trustees have committed to a further year of service – but there are still vacancies on the Board to be filled. Members are invited to consider volunteering - or to nominate any other Member - to join the Board of Trustees for the year ahead. All Members are entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. They do not need to have attended the lunch. If they wish, and are able, they can simply come to Beedles Lake Golf Club at 2.00 p.m. in time for the start of the meeting. We look forward to welcoming as many as possible to the event.” Anyone seeking further information about, or wishing to take part in Centre activities, should contact the Centre office (0116 2607 888 email: infor@syston-vc.org).

SPRING WILDLIFE WALK



This springtime wildlife walk will explore the birds, mammals, and insects that live on the Park, led by an expert guide.

9.30am-12.30pm, Saturday 8th April

The walk is approx. 2 hours long.

Adult: £7.50

Child (under 18): £5

Please note: children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Car parking charges apply.

This walk is suitable for adults and children aged 8+.

Sorry, no dogs allowed.

Please meet at **Newtown Linford Car Park (LE6 0HB)**, meeting your guide by the iron gates. Please aim to arrive approx. 10 minutes prior to the start of the activity.

Please note: the activity will end at the Deer Barns Café and Visitor Centre.

Book a place and find more details <https://www.bradgatepark.org/event/spring-wildlife-walk>



Easter Vintage Festival

Our Easter Vintage Festival is back for 2023 from the 7th-10th April!

All aboard for Great Central Railway's Easter Vintage Festival! Get ready to step back in time to a country fayre at Quorn & Woodhouse station. There's gallopers and a big wheel, traction engines, craft stalls, vintage cars, commercials and tractors. There's also a real ale tent with live music on Friday and Saturday.

More details and how to get tickets [here](#)

Model Railway Exhibitions Calendar:

-  **Syston Model Railway Society**
- Leicester Model Railway Show
- **Sat 29th - Sun 30th April 2023**
- **Roots at Thorpe Farm, Barkby Thorpe, Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 3QE**

OPENING TIMES: SAT 10am-4.30pm SUN 10am-4pm

ADMISSION: Adults £5.00 Children £4.00 Family £10.00

Once again the exhibition returns to ROOTS. The venue is slightly larger this year. There are 11 layouts and 7 traders. The usual Tombola stall as well as a 3D printing demo. Admission is £5 for adults and £4 for unaccompanied children. Accompanied under 16s go FREE.

Advanced booking is available and card payments are taken. Please note that there is no public transport to the venue. The nearest public transport is at Syston Railway Station; approx 1.5 miles away.

CONTACT:   07948 419664

FROM OUR MEMBERS

ROBIN HOOD

Continuing the exploration of characters that are fictional but some believe are real, and others of whom the reverse is true. I suspect I'm going to be a bit controversial in turning to Robin Hood. I know that some believe the portrayal of this hero, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor, is fully factually based. Sorry but no, that isn't the case. Forget Friar Tuck and Maid Marion, they were added to the story quite a while after the first tales circulated and are figments of someone's imagination. In fact, it could be argued that whole story as we know it, is largely fiction.

The Robin Hood Statue at Nottingham Castle



The name Robin Hood, or variants of it, does appear in historical documentation, but it isn't attributed to one single individual. Added to which, the story of Robin Hood has undergone more than one metamorphosis over the years.

The legend was already well established by medieval times. *The Vision of Piers Plowman* written by William Langland in c1377 is the earliest known literary mention, and it is only a passing mention, 'I do not know my paternoster perfectly as the priest sings it,' says the character Sloth. 'But I know rhymes of Robin Hood.'

Several 15th century ballads feature our hero, including in a collection called *A Gest of Robyn Hode*. Robin was described as a yeoman – a class between peasant and noble – who fought immoral officials, landowners and clergy, with the help of his friend, Little John, from their forest hideout, possibly in Sherwood Forest or Barnsdale in South Yorkshire. One ballad sees him kill and behead Guy of Gisborne (who in this telling is a hired killer rather than the Sheriff of Nottingham's deputy), before sticking Gisborne's severed head on his bow and gleefully mutilating its face with his knife. In another, Robin's men murder an innocent boy so he won't give them away. Not that these gory events would have shocked the populace of those times, nor endeared him to them any the less. This was a violent era, with much unrest, corruption in places high and low, and little by way of law enforcement.

Dressing as Robin Hood became an annual May Day event, even Henry VIII donned the famed Lincoln green, along with his courtiers, and entertained his first wife Catherine of Aragon. It was as part of the May Day celebrations that Friar Tuck and Maid Marian first made their appearance in Robin's tale.

The story began to change further with Robin having *Robin Hood depicted in Sherwood Forest*

supposedly taken part in the Crusades, only to return home and find his lands had been seized. His attempts to recover his lands, and his turn to kidnapping and theft, led to him being declared an outlaw. This was different to being declared a criminal, a criminal still had some protection from the law, an outlaw was deemed to be completely outside the law. He wasn't even entitled to a trial, if caught, he would simply be killed. Though outlaws were generally despised, some had been thrust into a period of political instability where they fought against an authority they believed to be illegitimate, they were accorded favourable status by the masses. It is in this light that the legend of Robin Hood has been cast. As the saying goes "One person's outlaw is another's freedom fighter".

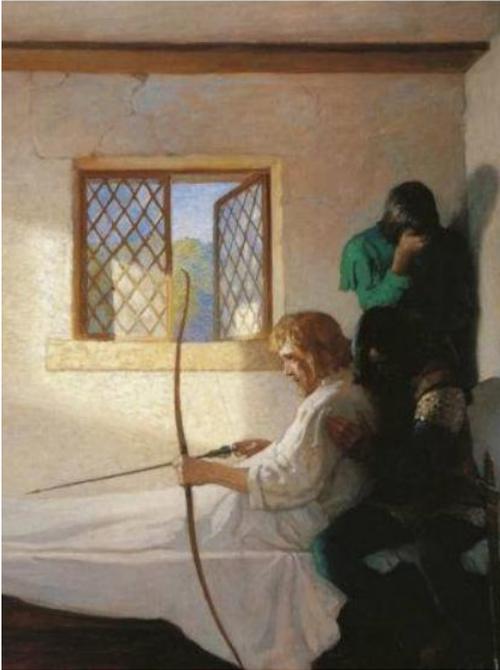


The Scottish chronicler John Major wrote in his 1521 *A History of Greater Britain* that Robin lived in the time of King Richard I, at the time when his brother John attempted to seize the throne, which was in the late 12th century – but this comes without any proof. Major similarly claimed Robin would “lay in wait in the woods but spoiled of their goods those only who were wealthy”, again there is nothing concrete to support this assertion.

So, what of any documentary evidence concerning Robin Hood? Well, the presumption that little written material from the period exists, is incorrect. A wealth of Court rolls, as in Royal written records on “rolls”, and other official documents, have remained intact and have been consulted by historians. Indeed transcribed versions of some can be found online. Variations of the name ‘Robin Hood’ were recorded in various documents, including at an assizes in York in 1225, where a fine of 32 shillings and sixpence was handed down to a fugitive called ‘Robert Hod’, and the King’s Remembrancer’s Memoranda Roll of 1262, which documented an incident involving an outlaw named ‘William Robehod’. Robin Hood has been identified (not very convincingly) with one of a number of Robin Hoods mentioned in the Wakefield Court Rolls during the reign of Edward II (1307–27), and, as a disinherited supporter of Simon de Montfort, who was killed at Evesham in 1265. None of these offer anything conclusive, and the dates of these references are spread across more than 100 years. It seems more likely that names like Robin Hood, Robin the Hood, Robehod and other variants, were being used as a common term for outlaws, rather than for one particular individual.

Martin Parker’s *A True Tale of Robin Hood*, published in 1632, stated unequivocally that the “renowned outlaw, Robert Earl of Huntington, vulgarly called Robin Hood, lived and died in AD 1198”, so he’s no longer portrayed as a yeoman, but a noblemen. However this claim is rather flawed, the real Earl of Huntingdon (the only possible interpretation of ‘Huntington’) at this date was David of Scotland, who died in 1219. Following the death of David’s son, John, in 1237, there

were no more earls of Huntingdon until the title was granted to William de Clinton a century later.



The story of Robin's death was then added at some point. As a sick and dying man he supposedly took refuge at Kirklees Priory, where, supported by Little John, he let fly an arrow, with the instruction that wherever it landed was to be his resting place. A mound exists in Kirklees Park, but excavation revealed no grave.

There is an alternative narrative on the subject, the Tudor writer Richard Grafton thought that the prioress had interred Robin by the side of the road:

“Where he had used to rob and spoyle those that passed that way. And upon his grave the sayde prioresse did lay a very fayre stone, wherein the names of Robert Hood, William of Goldesborough, and others were graven. And the cause why she buryed him there was, for that the common strangers and travailers, knowyng and seeyng him there buryed, might more

safely and without feare take their jorneyes that way, which they durst not do in the life of the sayd outlawes. And at either end of the sayde tombe was erected a crosse of stone, which is to be seen there at this present”.

An aside to this version is that the prioress actually poisoned Robin Hood!

Kirklees Priory came into the possession of the Armitage family following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, and in the 18th century Sir Samuel Armitage had the ground beneath the stone excavated to a depth of three feet. He thought that grave robbers may have been there before him, but in fact the real problem was the lack of a grave at all. The site did not appear to have been dug previously, and Armitage concluded that the memorial had been “brought from some other place, and by vulgar tradition ascribed to Robin Hood”. So, no proof there either!



The Gatehouse – all that remains standing

With many genuine historical characters, even further back than this era, ample evidence can be found to support their existence. That is not the case with Robin Hood and the exploits attributed to him and his merry men – but where would Nottinghamshire be without the legend of the man in Lincoln green, and his encounters with the infamous Sherriff and his deputy Guy of Gisborne?

DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our groups be able to use it? Might one of your fellow members be able to use it?



I would be pleased if you would offer the two machines (*pictures attached*) free to a good home in the April "Vitality." Buyer collects from 8 Quenby Crescent (**Tel:** 07582413517)

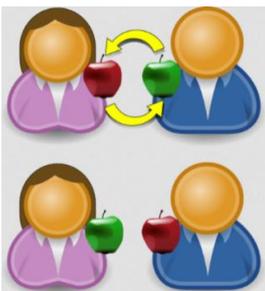
They are Gtech AirRam cleaner (with operating manual) and a cordless steam mop with instruction manual and accessories - 4 spare microfibre pads and measuring cup.

Both machines hardly used but have been in storage for some time.



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't. Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

SWAP STOP



Maybe you don't have something you are willing to give away, but how about swapping it with something from another member?

Are you a jig-saw fan looking to exchange with another jig-saw fan and give both of you a new challenge?

Do you have books you've read and would like to swap some with another bookworm?

Let me have details of what you have and what you want and we'll try and connect you with another member who wants what you have and has what you want. The usual email address applies.

POETRY CORNER

Easter Hymn by A E Housemen

If in that Syrian garden, ages slain,
You sleep, and know not you are dead in vain,
Nor even in dreams behold how dark and bright
Ascends in smoke and fire by day and night
The hate you died to quench and could but fan,
Sleep well and see no morning, son of man.

But if, the grave rent and the stone rolled by,
At the right hand of majesty on high
You sit, and sitting so remember yet
Your tears, your agony and bloody sweat,
Your cross and passion and the life you gave,
Bow hither out of heaven and see and save.

The Easter Flower by Claude McKay

Far from this foreign Easter damp and chilly
My soul steals to a pear-shaped plot of
ground,
Where gleamed the lilac-tinted Easter lily
Soft-scented in the air for yards around;

Alone, without a hint of guardian leaf!
Just like a fragile bell of silver rime,
It burst the tomb for freedom sweet and brief
In the young pregnant year at Eastertime;

And many thought it was a sacred sign,
And some called it the resurrection flower;
And I, a pagan, worshiped at its shrine,
Yielding my heart unto its perfumed power.

EASTER by Edmund Spenser

Most glorious Lord of Lyfe! that, on this day,
Didst make Thy triumph over death and sin;
And, having harrowd hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, deare Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest dye,
Being with Thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live for ever in felicity!

And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same againe;
And for Thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne!
So let us love, deare Love, lyke as we ought,
—Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

LAST SUPPER by Charles Wright

I seem to have come to the end of something, but
don't know what,
Full moon blood orange just over the top of the
redbud tree.
Maundy Thursday tomorrow,
then Good Friday, then Easter in full drag,
Dogwood blossoms like little crosses
All down the street,
lilies and jonquils bowing their mitred heads.

Perhaps it's a sentimentality about such fey things,
But I don't think so. One knows
There is no end to the other world,
no matter where it is.
In the event, a reliquary evening for sure,
The bones in their tiny boxes, rosettes under glass.

Or maybe it's just the way the snow fell
a couple of days ago,
So white on the white snowdrops.
As our fathers were bold to tell us,
it's either eat or be eaten.
Spring in its starched bib,
Winter's cutlery in its hands. Cold grace. Slice
and fork.

And finally.....

EASTER TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Dressing Up

Dressing up as Easter witches is a fun Easter tradition that young children of **Finland** take part in. The kids wear colourful clothing with painted freckles on their cheeks, usually on Palm Sunday in eastern Finland and Holy Saturday in western Finland. The little witches go door-to-door with willow twigs decorated with colourful feathers and crepe paper. Then they recite a rhyming blessing meant to drive away evil spirits in exchange for a chocolate egg.

On Holy Thursday in the Medieval town of **Verges, Spain**, the traditional "dansa de la mort," or "death dance," is performed. Everyone dresses like skeletons as they re-enact scenes from the Passion. The procession ends with frightening skeletons carrying boxes of ashes. The macabre dance begins at midnight and continues for three hours into the early morning.

In **Prizzi, Sicily**, "the *Abballu de daivuli* is a representation of devils from locals wearing terrifying masks of zinc and dressed in red robes". Those dressed in costume pester as many "souls" as they can (which really means making them pay for drinks) before the afternoon when the Virgin Mary and the risen Christ save the day by sending the devils away with angels.

Messing About with Water

In **Poland**, pouring water on one another is an Easter tradition called Śmigus-dyngus, a.k.a. Wet Monday. People gather on Easter Monday to try and drench each other with buckets of water, squirt guns, or anything they can get their hands on. Legend says girls who get soaked on Wet Monday will marry within the year.

"Sprinkling," a popular Easter tradition in **Hungary**, is observed on Easter Monday, also known as "Ducking Monday." Boys playfully sprinkle perfume or perfumed water on girls after getting their permission to do so and sometimes even ask for a kiss. People used to believe that water had a cleaning, healing, and fertility-inducing effect.

Fly a Kite

In **Bermuda**, people fly homemade kites on Good Friday. Legend has it, the tradition started when a local teacher had trouble explaining Jesus's resurrection to his Sunday school class. So, he made a kite to explain the concept.

Make a Fire

In areas of **Northwestern Europe**, natives light large bonfires called Easter Fires on Easter Sunday and Monday. They began as a way to chase the winter away — but now they bring communities together.

Make an Omelette

Residents of **Haux, France**, serve an enormous omelette on Easter Monday. They use more than 4,500 eggs and feed up to 1,000 people.

